

Serial No. 10/770,928, filed 2/3/04

Amendments to Specification:

Please add the following paragraph to the beginning of the application as follows:

[.05] This application is a Divisional of United States Patent Application Serial Number 09/940,106, filed August 27, 2001, Patent Number 6,701,763.

Please amend paragraph 1 as follows:

[1] This invention relates to an axle assembly, and more particularly, ~~the invention relates~~ to a hydroformed axle with a bearing shoulder and brake flange that are secured thereto preferably without the use of welds.

Please amend paragraph 2 as follows:

[2] Many prior art axle assemblies, such as for use in trucks or trailers, are constructed from tubes or solid members that are straight or bent to a desired shape. Numerous components are typically secured to the axle, typically by welding the axle component to the axle. For example, the brake assembly is supported on the axle by a brake flange, which is welded to the axle. Welding components to the axle requires that a consumable welding material be deposited on the brake component and axle in a relatively precise manner. As a result, the welding process may be expensive and difficult to control.

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Please amend paragraph 3 as follows:

- [3] The wheels are supported on the ends of the axle on bearing assemblies. Bearing races are pressed onto the axle to abut a shoulder, (which may be machined onto the axle), to locate the bearings axially. Machining can be a relatively expensive process. therefore Therefore, what is needed is an axle assembly on which a bearing shoulder may be provided, and to which a brake flange may be secured, to without the use of expensive machining or welding.

Please amend paragraph 4 as follows:

- [4] The present invention provides an axle assembly including a tubular member having an outer wall and an interior cavity. The other outer wall includes a first interlocking feature. An axle component mounting member, such as a bearing shoulder sleeve and/or a brake flange, is arranged on a portion of the outer wall. The mounting member includes a second interlocking feature coacting with the first interlocking feature to affix the mounting member and tubular member to one another. The axle assembly may be formed by arranging the the mounting member into a die assembly. A tubular member may be arranged in the die assembly within an opening in the mounting member. A hydroforming process may be employed to pressurize a cavity within the tubular member. A portion of the tubular member is deformed into engagement with the mounting member to affix the mounting member to the tubular member.

Please amend paragraph 5 as follows:

- [5] Accordingly, the above invention provides an axle assembly on which a bearing shoulder may be provided and to which a brake flange may be secured to without the use of expensive machining or welding.

Please amend paragraph 11 as follows:

- [11] Figure 5A is a partial cross-sectional view of one embodiment of the interlocking features taken along line 5-5 lines 5A-5B of Figure 3; and

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Please amend paragraph 12 as follows:

- [12] Figure 5B is a partial cross-sectional view of another embodiment of the interlocking features taken along ~~line 5-5~~ lines 5B-5B of Figure 3.

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